

Message Text

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TAGS: ELAB, TH

SUBJECT: ITF - BRAC REGIONAL SEMINAR

REF: STATE 025529 (NOTAL)

1. THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKERS FEDERATION (ITF) BROTHERHOOD OF RAILWAY AND AIRLINE CLERKS (BRAC) ASIAN REGIONAL SEMINAR FOR LABOR EDUCATORS BEGAN ITS THREE WEEK PROGRAM MONDAY. LABOR EDUCATORS FROM SEVERAL ASIAN COUNTRIES ALONG WITH THAI PARTICIPANTS REPRESENTING RAILWAY, BUS, TRUCK TRANSPORT, AIRLINE AND DOCK WORKERS UNIONS WILL DISCUSS LABOR UNION ORGANIZATION AND TEACHING METHODS.

2. AT THE OPENING CEREMONY ATTENDED BY APPROXIMATELY TWO HUNDRED LABOR UNION OFFICIALS AND OFFICIALS OF THE RTG LABOR DEPARTMENT, THE PRESEIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATION OF LABOR UNIONS OF THAILAND (CLUT) PHAISAN THAWATCHAINAN AND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER MAJ.GEN. PRAMAN ADIREKSAN TRADED ACCUSATIONS IN MAKING OPENING REMARKS. PHAISAN'S SPEECH, WHICH DREW CHEERS FROM THE PARTISAN CROWD, CHARGED MANAGEMENT WITH LOOKING DOWN ON LABOR AND REFUSING TO RECOGNIZE THAT LABOR UNIONS HAD A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE TO PLAY IN THAI SOCIETY. THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WARNED WORKERS TO BEWARE OF SOCIALIST BLOC LABOR MOVEMENTS AND RECOMMENDED INSTEAD THAI LABOR AFFILIATE WITH LABOR ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE FREE WORLD. PRAMAN, A PAST PRESIDENT OF THE THAI TEXTILE ASSOCIATION, THEN WENT ON TO SPREAD THE BLAME FOR THAILAND'S LABOR UNREST AMONG LABOR, MANAGEMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT.

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3. COMMENT: IF OPENING DAY ENTHUSIASM IS ANY INDICATION, THE SEMINAR WILL BE A SUCCESS. HOWEVER, THAI LABOR HAS NOT YET DEVELOPED AN INTERNATIONAL ORIENTATION, BEYOND LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT UNION OR FOUNDATION SPONSORED TRIP ABROAD. WHILE THE ITF-BRAC SEMINAR MAY RESULT IN MORE SUBSTANTIAL INTERNATIONAL TIES, THAI LABOR'S CURRENT PRE-OCCUPATION WITH DOMESTIC POLITICS DIVERTED ATTENTION FROM THE BROADER PURPOSES OF THE MEETING. PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT IS SCHEDULED TO CLOSE THE SEMINAR MARCH 25 AND WE WILL REPORT ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SEMINAR AT THAT TIME.

WHITEHOUSE

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